

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education

PROVINCE HELPS FUND ECO-FRIENDLY HYBRID SCHOOL BUS

KELOWNA – The Province will contribute \$50,000 for a new low-emission, environmentally friendly hybrid school bus in the Central Okanagan school district – the first of its kind in Canada, Education Minister Shirley Bond announced on Earth Day.

“Hybrid vehicles have significantly lower emissions, reducing diesel engine emissions by up to 90 per cent,” said Bond. “That means cleaner air and less smog. This not only sets a good example for students, it supports the Province’s commitment to reduce our carbon footprint on the B.C. landscape.”

Hybrid vehicles use a battery-powered electric motor during lower speeds, and then a diesel-powered engine starts after the vehicle reaches 40 km/h. Batteries are recharged when the driver brakes.

“We currently offer individuals a \$2,000 PST exemption on the purchase of hybrid vehicles in B.C.,” said Environment Minister Barry Penner. “We believe that encouraging and educating British Columbians to care for the environment is the best way to ensure healthier, more responsible choices today and into the future.”

Hybrid vehicles are up to 40 per cent more fuel efficient than a regular diesel bus, and there is less wear-and-tear on the engine. A school bus driven 20,000 km a year could save 5,000 litres of diesel fuel, or more than \$4,500 at today’s prices.

“We are all becoming more aware of the importance of protecting our environment,” said school board chair Moyra Baxter. “Our school district already has an anti-idling bylaw, and when that hybrid bus picks up and drops off students there will be no fumes. We’d like to thank the Province for its contribution to this purchase.”

A 72-passenger hybrid vehicle costs approximately \$230,000 – about \$120,000 more than a regular school bus. The district had \$180,000 available, thanks to approved capital funding and savings from other bus purchases. The Province will contribute the additional \$50,000.

The hybrid school bus supports the Province’s throne speech commitment to reduce B.C.’s greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 percent below current levels by 2020. The bus will be running in Kelowna in time for the new school year in September.

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